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Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Summary record of the 7th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Tuesday, 21 June 2011, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Núñez Mosquera ..... (Cuba)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

1. *The agenda was adopted.*

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (*continued*)

2. **Ms. St. John** (Grenada) said that her country continued to support the idea of self-determination for peoples, and was fully cognizant of the intractable debate on the question of sovereignty of the Falkland Islands/Malvinas. She reiterated her Government's call, made in previous years, for fresh thinking on the thorny issue.

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (A/AC.109/2011/L.9)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2011/L.9: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

3. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2011/L.9 was adopted.*

Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations (A/66/63; A/AC.109/2011/L.10; E/2011/73)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2011/L.10: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and international institutions associated with the United Nations

4. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2011/L.10 was adopted.*

5. **Ms. Eloeva** (Russian Federation) said that her Government consistently advocated the right of the Non-Self-Governing Territories to self-determination and independence. However, consideration of the issue in the Economic and Social Council distracted the Council from its primary function and should not form part of its agenda.

6. While the Russian Federation had not stood in the way of the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, when the matter was taken up in the Fourth Committee and the plenary Assembly, it would be guided by its consistent position on the issue.

Economic and other activities which affect the interests of peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (A/AC.109/2011/L.11)

Draft resolution A/AC.109/2011/L.11: Economic and other activities which affect the interests of peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories

7. *Draft resolution A/AC.109/2011/L.11 was adopted.*

Questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, Saint Helena, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands (A/AC.109/2011/15 and A/AC.109/2011/L.8)

Hearing of petitioners: Guam

8. **The Chairman** said that, in line with the Special Committee's usual practice, petitioners would be invited to address the Special Committee and would withdraw after making their statements.

9. **Ms. Calvo**, speaking on behalf of Eddie Baza Calvo, Governor of Guam, said that a half-millennium of colonialism had taken a great toll on her people. Two hundred and thirty years of Spanish colonial rule had devastated the Chamorro people, visiting upon them new diseases, war and oppression. After the Spanish-American War, the United States of America had claimed Guam, leaving Chamorros with no representation or say in their future. Japan's foray into imperialism during the Second World War had been especially brutal for Guam, as the Japanese Imperial Army had inflicted numerous atrocities on Chamorros. While the United States liberation of Guam in 1944 brought an end to the enslavement of Chamorros, colonial domination persisted. What was more, the Chamorro people had yet to receive war reparations. The silence of the United States Government on that issue reinforced the point that Guam could no longer remain a colony in perpetuity.

10. She was thankful that the United States of America, the administering Power, recognized Guam's right to self-determination, and that it had pledged to match local funding allocated for decolonization efforts. The Government of Guam was committed to a plebiscite. After years of taxation without full

representation, quasi-citizenship and partial belonging, the Chamorro people must make an educated decision on their future political status. She appealed to the Special Committee for support of her people's human rights.

11. **Mr. Alvarez** (Executive Director, Commission on Decolonization, Government of Guam), speaking also on behalf of the Governor of Guam, said that Guam had made significant strides on the issue of decolonization in the previous four months. His Government planned to undertake an aggressive campaign to convey its situation to national and international audiences. In addition, Guam's delegate to the United States Congress had introduced legislation to appropriate funds for an educational campaign on Chamorro self-determination.

12. Local legislation clearly defined Chamorros on Guam as the colonized people on Guam with the right to self-determination. The Governor of Guam intended to uphold that position by holding a plebiscite for the exercise of Chamorro self-determination within five years, with the ultimate aim of resolving the question of Guam's political status.

13. Noting the renewed sense of commitment with respect to the issue, he proposed that several steps be taken towards resolving it, including the appointment of a representative from the office of the President of the United States of America to the United States Congress; use of national and international media to raise awareness of the plight of the Chamorro people; and advocacy for Guam by the United Nations and other internationally known groups, organizations and personalities.

14. **Ms. Natividad** (President, Guahan Coalition for Peace and Justice) said that her organization had consistently opposed the administering Power's plans for military build-up in Guam. With no prior consultation of Guam's leaders or people, the United States had concluded a bilateral agreement with Japan in 2006 to transfer 8,000 United States Marines from Japan to Guam. Guam's colonial condition thus made possible the exploitation of its land and the violation of the rights of the Chamorro people in support of the United States' militarist agenda.

15. Since the announcement of the planned military build-up, members of the Chamorro community had come before the Special Committee yearly to plead for its intervention; nonetheless, Guam's political status remained unresolved. She called on Committee members to focus on the specific actions it, and the United Nations system more broadly, could take to resolve the question of Guam.

16. In her country's experience, United Nations resolutions on self-determination lacked the authority to bring about change in colonial situations. In September 2010, the United States Government had set into motion the awarding of United States Department of Defense contracts for the Guam build-up, despite widespread concern among the Chamorro community regarding the impact of the build-up on people living outside military fences. The community's outcry, for the most part, had gone unheeded by the United States Government.

17. Resistance to the increased military presence on Guam stemmed from the exploitative relationship which the United States military had with the island. The military's presence in Guam had resulted in radiation exposure, environmental devastation and toxic contamination of the island and its people, as evinced by the poor health of many Chamorros, the ethnic group most affected. Consistent with pervasive exposure to toxic sites located on the island's military bases, Chamorros had disproportionately high cancer rates. Moreover, Guam residents were still not eligible for compensation under the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act passed by the United States Congress.

18. Other concerns related to militarization included the island's segregated school system and the United States military's appropriation of a third of its territory. The military was currently attempting to seize additional land, where a sacred Chamorro village was located, to build a live firing range. Lastly, increased militarization of Guam would reduce the Chamorro people's status to that of minority in the event of a plebiscite. In the light of those concerns, her organization recommended that Guam should remain on the list of Non-Self-Governing Territories until it had exercised its right to self-determination; that the Special Committee should declare that the United States' plans for increased militarization of Guam hindered the exercise of that right; that the United Nations should provide financial and technical assistance for an educational campaign on political status for the people of Guam; that the United Nations should send a visiting mission to observe the plebiscite, which should be held within five years; and

that the United Nations should develop detailed plans for the decolonization of all Non-Self-Governing Territories by the end of the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

19. **Mr. Matsushima** (We are Loochoo) said that the necessity of demilitarization of Guam could best be understood by taking into account the Okinawan experience, for historical and other reasons. In the case of each island, the imperial Power — the United States of America and Japan, respectively — had annexed the territory and imposed colonial policies on its inhabitants. Furthermore, military policies on Guam and Okinawa, such as the recent building of new bases on Okinawa and the transfer of over 8,000 United States Marines and their dependants from Okinawa to Guam, had been adopted by the United States and Japanese Governments unilaterally, ignoring the people's wishes. Nevertheless, Chamorros had established a number of organizations to push for decolonization of Guam.

20. If the United States Marines moved to Guam, the Chamorro people would face difficulties similar to those faced by the people of Okinawa, who had been subjected to fires and accidents caused by live ammunition, aircraft crashes, deafening noise, and destruction of the environment and historical sites. Moreover, from 1972 to 2010, 5,705 military-related crimes had been committed.

21. The Japanese Government had been complicit in the construction of new bases on Guam, supplying significant funding to that end. Okinawans opposed the move of the United States Marines to Guam and the construction of new bases on either island. The reduction of bases on Okinawa would promote a similar process in the sister island of Guam. That demilitarization process must take place within the broader decolonization efforts of the Special Committee.

22. **Ms. Baza** (Conscious Living) said her organization supported the objective of eliminating colonialism in the present decade, as set forth in General Assembly resolution 65/119. It appealed to the administering Power and the relevant United Nations organizations, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to assist Guam in its efforts to achieve political independence and economic development.

23. Guam's colonial relationship with its administering Power was clearly counter to the basic principles of democracy. The United States could not continue to enforce democracy throughout the world while denying political participation of its own citizens.

24. Uncontrolled immigration, promoted by the colonial Government, led to division and competition between indigenous peoples and various other groups for limited resources. As a result of scarcity, the current generation of immigrants had been forced to rely on welfare assistance from the administering Power. Although the diverse immigrant populations had contributed to the island's development, their settling in Guam had also led to erosion in traditional family structure, a lower standard of living, and increased pressure on indigenous youth to conform to Western values.

25. The purpose of indigenous research was to support indigenous values, attitudes and practices. Traditional forms of knowledge were sacred to members of a culture, and their transmission was intimately linked to language. The teaching practices introduced by the administering Power constituted a hindrance to decolonization by undermining traditional practices, especially as they related to language acquisition. The primary aim of the public education provided by the administering Power had been a political one, namely, to domesticate the Chamorro people.

26. Colonized individuals, exposed to imperialism at the expense of their own values, suffered from a number of pathological psychological conditions, including the cultural Stockholm syndrome, which led members of an oppressed group to accept the dominant cultural values, including the stereotypes of their own group. Therefore, politically repressed people maintained the privileges of the administering Power, silencing cries for social justice in so doing. Therapeutic decolonization would entail using indigenous approaches to raise consciousness of the colonized mentality and correct cognitive distortions in order to achieve personal and collective transformation.

27. Though the watchwords had changed — from "manifest destiny" to globalization — the war to conquer her country's land and resources had not only persisted but expanded to justify the final conquest of everything. Ending the colonial war of conquest required a conscious refocusing of values away from the glamour of materialism and towards respect for people and their way of life.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.